# STATE WATER PLAN TASK FORCE MEETING

January 31, 2022, 9:00 A.M.

# Illinois Department of Natural Resources

## Web-Ex Meeting Minutes

#### **Task Force Members Present:**

IDNR-OWR: Loren Wobig, Wes Cattoor, Terra McParland, Rick Pohlman, Steve Altman, Megan

McKinney

IDNR-ORC: Brian Metzke

ISWS: Laura Keefer, Walt Kelly, Trent Ford, Yu-Feng Forest Lin, David Kristovich

IDOT: BJ Murray

IEPA: Scott Twait, Gary Bingenheimer, Christine Davis, Michael Summers, Michael Brown

**IDOA: Michael Woods** 

IDPH: Brian Cox IEMA: Zachary Krug

Agencies not in attendance: IDNR-OMM, DCEO, IWRC, IPCB.

### **Non-Members Present:**

Kelly Thompson: IL Environmental Regulatory Group (IERG)

Rachel Siegel: Illinois Beaver Alliance

The Meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. The meeting agenda, meeting recording and minutes are posted on the State Water Plan Task Force (SWPTF) website. The website also contains general information about the State Water Plan's history and current activity.

(https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/WaterResources/Pages/StateWaterPlanTaskForce.aspx)

Note: An Illinois State Water Plan (SWP) was first published in March of 1967 and was updated in 1984. The Task Force which compiled the 1984 report continued to meet and publish several subsequent documents to continue the planning process and to provide updated information. That State Water Plan Task Force (SWPTF) continues to meet quarterly to address issues related to the waters of Illinois. The SWPTF is comprised of state agency representatives and invited federal and local partners.

**Welcome:** Loren welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending and participating in this effort. Loren reminded the group that today we are going to dive into two topic areas for the SWP. We want to have some general discussions and feedback.

Wes reviewed the agenda. There will be no formal presentation today since we are going to be reviewing the submitted topic recommendations instead. Today we're talking about: *Erosion & Sedimentation and Climate Change*. When reviewing the draft sections, we will try to discuss cross cutting issues. During the meeting, the two topics were shared online for discussion purposes and we discussed each issue and recommendation separately.

### **Topic Discussion: Erosion & Sedimentation – Michael Woods**

For the overview and issues, they pulled from the original SWP and reached out to partners.
 They want to integrate the nutrient loss strategy and climate smart resilience (will be discussed

- later today) into the issues and neither were part of the original SWP. They are recommending best management practices to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation across IL.
- The DOA is also currently looking at their internal nutrient loss reduction strategy efforts which ties in well with this section of the SWP.
- It was noted that the recommendation table did not follow the approved template so Wes will send the template. Also noted that the issues were sometimes listed in the recommendation so the table might need to be revised to separate the issues/recommendations in two columns. Perhaps discuss more of the global issues in the overview.
- Comments from the Task Force are listed below for the Topic Leader's use.

Recommendation	Commonts
1. Reinvigorate the Soil Erosion and Water Quality Advisory Committee (SEWQAC) and its two subcommittees: (i) State Watershed priority committee and (ii) Education Committee.	- Items 1 and 2 were grouped together - The funding columns were not filled out with template categories and will need to be for final submission The funding column indicates non-state agency funding for local conservation districts and WQ coordinator. It was noted that funding requests for the SWP needs to go thru state agencies. Not sure if this will be thru IEPA or DOA. DOA was noted as lead but IEPA was noted for funding. Usually the lead agency gets the funding. Michael will clarify Will IEPA need funding to implement contracts? DOA is thinking of taking the responsibility back and would need to increase field office staff. Chris suggested Michael coordinate with Sanjay at IEPA on this issue They want to reinvigorate what was accomplished in the 2000's. They need additional outreach/coordination with conservation districts. Michael will look into the history and where they want to take this before the public outreach segment in the spring There needs to be good educational outreach with this effort. A survey indicated that 62% didn't know these. Need to work with IFB, extensions and IEPA on this part of the effort Committee thinks this tackles social justice and climate change issues Funding need is to continue funding - There is a Senate Bill to look at nutrient loss funding and if that gets funded, that would address until 2035.
2. Review and revise a state soil erosion and water quality long-range plan that encourages all county, state and federal agencies to align annual work plans consistent with the plan and provide a forum to discuss annual work plans.	- No funding required but changes in Partners for Conservation (PFC) rules may be needed.

#### Recommendation

- 3. Short term objective: (i) educate industry decision makers such as landowners, financial institutions, insurance providers, urban planners, agricultural producers, and industry partners; (ii) invest in the expansion of the Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources (STAR) program to assist farm operators and land owners in evaluating their nutrient and soil loss management practices on individual fields; and iii) invest in the expansion of the Illinois Urban Manual (IUM) program to help Illinois Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) in their efforts to assist planners, developers, engineers, and government officials in selecting Soil Erosion & Sediment Control (SESC) standards and Best Management Practices (BMPs) for their development projects
- 4. Intermediate objective: target education programs from elementary to higher education on the impact of soil erosion and sedimentation and highlight best management practices to reduce human impact on soil erosion and sedimentation.
- 5. Long-term objectives: establish micro-credentialling and apprenticeship programs dedicated to soil and water quality conservation in partnership with academic institutions to revitalize and advance continued education that leads to an expanded human capacity needed to address the growing challenges.
- 6. Complete a soil erosion and sedimentation survey in all counties by the year 2025, outlining the best management practices needed to reduce erosion and sediment loss at the local level.
- 7. Expand the critical staffing capacity needed to advance efforts that reduce soil erosion and sedimentation loss at the local level.

#### **Comments**

- Items 3-5 recommendations all similar for outreach and education but at different levels.
- First level (short-term) is outreach to industry decision makers (landowners, financial institutions, insurance providers, urban planners, agriculture producers and industry partners) using 3 different methods.
- It was noted to explain why this is needed in the issues column.
- 62% of the farm land is owned by absentee owners or absentee farmers. Therefore, important that those that own the land be engaged since they ultimately make land plans.
- An additional part of this was to invest in saving tomorrow's agriculture resources using the STAR program. It is sort of like a Michelin Star for restaurants so it becomes a badge of honor to hang the plaque.
- need to get future generations thinking and engaging them
- all levels of education, make sure these particular elements are on the forefront of educational initiatives.
- Start a program similar to what was done in the 1980s
- we have a major capacity challenge, hard to find individuals that will pursue a career in water conservation-based issues, especially in soil erosion and sedimentation.
- -There will probably need to be some funding for an apprentice program or funding with partners or at a community college board.
- -Items 6-15 all pertain to increase expectations of all SWCD's to meet goals withing local watersheds.
  -Erosion goals need to be made at the local level, but unfortunately, we tend to look at it at the state wide level goals. But we can meet local goals easier and make more headway.
- It is also important to celebrate what is happening on the local level with respect to best management practices.
- -We can't bring fedl funds into BMPs if we don't have staff to support our local producers and identify, track and implement those practices.

Recommendation	Comments
	-We are identifying the obstacles locals are facing and staffing is the linchpin in the entire process.
8. Review and align the efficient and effective use of financial and technical resources by targeting resources into areas with the greatest resource concerns and needs.	<ul> <li>-Instead of divvying up resources equally, it will be better to focus on those with the biggest needs.</li> <li>- The state varies NSEW and BMPs vary depending on location of state/watersheds, and many watersheds cross SWCD boundaries.</li> </ul>
9. Expand existing state cost-share assistance for installation of conservation practices on land for which a valid complaint has been filed under the Partners for Conservation program or other federal initiatives.	<ul> <li>Ensure that PFC funds continue to assist with cost share initiatives.</li> <li>Cover crops are not the only solution, need to also look at no till practices</li> <li>Come up with a way to support rewarding individuals that have practiced for years since they will continue to be the role models for other producers as we move forward.</li> </ul>
10. Evaluate and monitor marginal lands to ensure best management practices are advanced or land is put into less insensitive land use practices.	-Crop insurance and other support might entice producers to produce on marginal lands but we need to make sure that those lands are monitored to ensure BMPs are used. It is tricky since land might be taken out of production and DOA doesn't want to see that but how do they shift the way the land is utilized?
11. Expand efforts that share available information that shows that erosion and sediment control practices infield can be used to greatly reduce the quantity of eroding soil on agricultural land, and that edge-of-field practices can effectively reduce sediment transport.	Make sure the in-field and edge of field practices initiatives are being shared across SWCDs.
12. Establish performance-based Producer-Led Watershed Councils across the state to reduce phosphorus runoff, improve water quality and enhance agricultural productivity.	-WI has producer led watershed councils and they've been extremely successful to engage producers -Producer to producer can be more influential than by a state agency or SWCD expertsThey want to keep it voluntary and not regulated or mandated.
13. Establish a state-funded Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant program that fosters innovation and shared learning among members to bring about continuous measurable improvements in areas such as water quality and soil health by exploring innovative on-farm conservation practices.	- This is a counterpoint to No. 12 - WI has a wonderful model that gives out grants to local producers that develop and implement innovative practices. The initiatives are then supported by the water conservation district experts
14. Foster a revenue leveraging atmosphere that seeks to identify and secure federal funds that augment all state funds dedicated to soil erosion and sedimentation efforts.	<ul> <li>Group needs to talk with Loren about how to implement this.</li> <li>It is key to increase efforts is to bring in more federal dollars to match the state funds.</li> </ul>

Recommendation	Comments
15. Expand funding through the IEPA's Soil Erosion & Sediment Control (SESC) Inspection program so more SWCDs can participate and provide technical assistance to the urban community through involvement on the Illinois Urban Manual (IUM) Technical Review and Steering Committees, review of construction site plans, and regular SESC inspections of construction sites	<ul> <li>There are current initiatives such as 30x30,</li> <li>America Beautiful and other climate initiatives.</li> <li>Expand funding for the inspection program to bring in more districts for participation.</li> <li>Also provide more technical assistance to the urban community</li> </ul>
16. Develop new and refine existing incentives to encourage landowners and industry partners (i.e. financial institutions, insurance companies, etc.) to participate in the adoption of soil conservation practices.	-What is a renter's incentive to place conservation practices when they don't know if they will have a contract for future years. Many initiatives are a long-term investment so we need to provide support to producers.  - Someone asked that as state government, we should be practicing what we are preaching, as we might not be practicing conservation measures for our leased lands. Maybe recommend that the state, through an executive order or something, implement these practices as demonstration and how it can be done. We do have a few farms in DNR that we do try to practice these as demonstrations but we could apply that statewidePerhaps add a new recommendation to review state owned lands and ensure they are practicing. For all state agencies. Each Agency probably has a realty division that deals with land ownership and could help with those assessments.
17. Encourage and support expanded research through the Illinois Nutrient Research and Education Council (NREC) that outlines conservation economics and the advancements of best management practices that enhance nutrient utilization, increase crop production, and protect water quality.	- Maybe look at what we can do to implement some of these on our state lands
18. Encourage and support expanded research through the Illinois Urban Manual (IUM) program to ensure the IUM stays up to date and maintains technical accuracy so that it can continue to be used as a tool for planning and maintaining standards and practices on construction sites as well as for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit compliance.	<ul> <li>This might be more aligned with IEPA? Maybe some things need to be revitalized so further coordination is needed.</li> <li>Reminder for the group that all recommendations have to have a measurable outcome within 5 years so you'll need to be able to show that items have been completed. Instead of saying encourage and support, maybe that you update the manual every 5 years. All these recommendations are great, they just might need fine tuning.</li> </ul>

Recommendation	Comments
19. Advance funding to support the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategies (NLRS) working groups that guide state efforts to improve water quality at home and downstream by reducing nitrogen and phosphorus levels in our lakes, streams, and rivers.	<ul> <li>-The NLRS is the guiding factor for reducing sedimentation and was not part of the original SWP.</li> <li>- He will add some measurable objectives.</li> <li>- There is a new Senate Bill being promoted around this topic so that will need to be tied into the SWP as well.</li> </ul>
20. Expand the Illinois Groundwater Monitoring Well Network program ran by the Illinois Department of Agriculture to: (i) focus energies and resources towards monitoring nutrient loss strategies that impact soil erosion and sedimentation; and (ii) support the statewide measurement programs for stream flow, water quality, and sedimentation as measures of the problem and progress.	-Some equipment is not being utilized to full extent. Past years have been focused mostly on pesticides. Maybe can add N&P ISWS also has some groundwater monitoring networks so coordination will occur offline for enhancing both.
21. Continue to coordinate existing conservation and watershed programs, and initiate a complimentary conservation management program administered by IDOA to direct state and federal resources into projects which will help protect important water resources, control soil erosion and sedimentation on agricultural land, and monitor nutrient loss reduction strategies.	<ul> <li>This is expanding on initial recommendation in original SWP</li> <li>Reminded again how important collaboration is to build or rebuild former interagency relationships.</li> </ul>
22. Fund the development of 4 additional Bureau of Land and Water Resource Regional Representatives.	- Been hard to replace losses for attrition.
23. Establish an IDOA Division of Natural Resources Education position responsible for the development and dissemination of educational programs and materials	<ul> <li>Similar to what IDNR has for a staff</li> <li>Discussed that this issue is throughout all topics and maybe can be pointed out more in the introduction as well. While SWP provides great programmatic recommendations, there has to be commensurate increase in staffing.</li> <li>Also need to get younger people in the pipeline</li> <li>Might need to make sure contemporary positions include climate smart and resilient skills, a whole new group of types to advance initiatives.</li> <li>It was noted that these last 2 recommendations might be double counting since staffing is implied in some of the program needs. We'll have to decide how to address for the entire report.</li> </ul>

• It was noted that sometimes federal matching funding is available. Will need to decide as a group the best way to handle that. Add another funding category called "Leverage federal funding match" or something similar. Similarly, matching partner funds? Loren W. will review and determine the path forward.

- In general, DOA staffing has been reduced and so some funding will be required to bring back and hire new staff since even if get federal dollars, you need staff to manage the grants.
- It was noted that lots of federal money is coming in this year for the next farm bill (trillions instead of billions) so it would be good to find a way to ensure that those dollars come to IL. We also currently have lots of partners that have invested in conservation efforts and maybe they haven't been matched enough to increase value. IA and WI are putting lots of money into these types of initiatives because they have learned how to leverage.
- Someone asked How do we use the SWP and its implementation to drive future budget plans. We are hoping the SWP as it gets updated and briefings on a regular basis (annually), the state GA will understand where we stand as a collective of agencies dealing with water and what initiatives and objectives are needed. Then we hope this opens the door to future individual programmatic discussions. Need to consider budget planning at the right time.
- We need an inventory of marginal lands in state. Laura asked how that differs from the current inventory of highly erodible lands? This needs to be coordinated with Michelle Bloomquist of IEPA. Marginal land should be moved to less intensive land use to reduce sediment loading.

### **Topic Discussion: Climate Change – David Kristovich**

- Comments from the Task Force are listed below for the Topic Leader's use. Yellow highlight indicates cross-cutting with another water topic.
- Overview Types of climate change projections in IL. Noted that climate change directly
  impacts all topics in SWP but some areas need to be emphasized: urban issues, winter impacts,
  and agricultural impacts.
- The issues and recommendations were filled out but the other 3 columns (lead agency, funding and action) will need to be filled out later by David's group but it is more challenging for this group. We might need to look at these recommendations differently, with maybe several agencies. It was noted that some recommendations are duplicates of other sections, some need federal funding, some are national issues so need federal partnerships like the Erosion Control section just discussed.
- Also need to look at this section differently with respect to redundant recommendations. Dave thought if the recommendations are brought up more than once, that might not be a bad thing.

#### Recommendation **Comments** 1. Increase quality and number of climate - maybe add more detail like the number of added monitoring sites in sensitive areas to detect stations or the type precipitation extremes. Special emphasis is - He's suggesting increase both the quality and number of monitoring sites in sensitive areas to needed on regions of diverse agricultural practices as well as growing suburban and predict precipitation extremes. - A special emphasis is needed on regions of diverse urban areas. [Cross cutting with Data Management, same agricultural practices as well as growing suburban recommendation] and urban areas. -The first recommendation was to collect the data. 2. As climate change poses serious challenges to the social and ecological systems, it is critical The second is to share the data. Data is often to provide climate information to stakeholders difficult to obtain and interpret by decision makers, and communities of the state to meet the stakeholders, and the public. This is critical to meet climate-adaptive management needs. The climate adaptive management needs. development of web-based climate tool-kits

Recommendation	Comments
are needed increase the accessibility and usability of climate information.	<ul> <li>It is important to develop web-based climate toolkits to increase accessibility and usability.</li> <li>As these are recommendations, make sure the problem is stated in the issue and only discuss the recommendation in the recommendation column.</li> </ul>
3. Physical and financial support is needed to increase the availability of climate data, particularly of future climate outlooks, at size and time scales small enough to inform local mitigation efforts.	<ul> <li>First point looked at what is happening and history. This point is to look at the future instead.</li> <li>This is larger scale needs for funding to provide adequate detail to simulate local impacts.</li> </ul>
4. Increased online analyses and tools should be developed to provide guidance on societal needs that are affected by multiple concurrent climate characteristics (such as wind speed, solar radiation, relative humidity, temperature, precipitation, etc.).	<ul> <li>This item is to focus not on physics of problem but the societal impacts (wind chill, urban islands).</li> <li>It was noted that societies will be impacted by multiple, concurrent climate characteristics and need to know how those impact people directly.</li> <li>Is there a specific audience that will benefit?</li> <li>Other agencies, community leaders, public works, DOTs, public health.</li> </ul>
5. Urban areas both alter storm climatology and are vulnerable to impacts of this changing climate. Provide high-resolution information in public-oriented publications, presentations, and online information sources on anticipated changes in storm intensity and frequency, particularly in urban areas where both the storm frequency and flooding impacts are expected to be augmented. This is particularly critical in communities with combined storm sewer drainage systems. Additional research is needed in coming years on climate change impacts on storms, especially over urban areas and their fringes as well as variations in climate within urban areas.	<ul> <li>this is targeted for a specific audience</li> <li>Urban and fringe areas are particularly vulnerable to changing storm frequencies and intensity.</li> <li>First is that we need to provide more public materials at a higher resolution.</li> <li>Second is what additional research is needed?</li> <li>Could this be a GIS map to share local information? Yes, partly but this would be for future projections and better interpolations for river floods, ice formation, etc.</li> </ul>
6. Additional research, publications and online tools are needed to improve models of how various agricultural practices (such as cultivation strategies, timing of application of chemicals, etc.) affect crop evolution and regional changes in climate.	<ul> <li>this issue is not how climate affects agriculture but the opposite, how agricultural practices affect the climate.</li> <li>DOA could promote and collaborate using PRI on behalf?</li> <li>Also need a research component as we learn more about climate change.</li> </ul>
7. Bulletin 75, which provides information on the frequency of climatically extreme precipitation events for structural planning, needs to be updated as often as possible, at least at 10-year time intervals.	<ul> <li>need to look at infrastructure impact from the long-term climate changes.</li> <li>Broke discussion into short duration and seasonal and remaining points are broken into those categories.</li> <li>Look at 2-3 day intense rainfall/snow, look at short duration, high intense events</li> </ul>

Recommendation	Comments
	- look at seasonal impacts for ppt and especially extremes
8. Support is needed in the development of analyses of projected future precipitation extreme events, similar to Bulletin 75, for future time periods (such as 25 and 50 years into the future). As climate science rapidly increases, it would be necessary to update such a publication at least every 5-10 years.  [Cross cutting with Flood Damage Mitigation, same recommendation]	<ul> <li>- 10 years is a good time frame for impacts to design standards and such. Keeping in mind it takes years to plan/design/construct a project.</li> <li>- It was noted that precipitation extremes in a weekly timeframe creates challenges for mitigation efforts.</li> <li>-This can be updated as the same time as Bulletin 75 or offset each other.</li> </ul>
9. Research is needed to understand the effects of non-stationarity on projected seasonal precipitation and impacts, especially during spring and summer. Observed increases in spring and summer precipitation in source regions for large rivers in/near Illinois in recent years has led to increased risk of long-duration river flooding.	- Could this be melded into the Bulletin 75 updates? It was noted that the old Bulletin 70 might have had info on growing seasons and winter, etc. but the new 75 did not. Perhaps this can be added but need/want more detail now Maybe move 1 <sup>st</sup> sentence into issues column.
10. Climate trends and models suggest the increased probability of flash droughts, particularly in summer months. On-line information on the potential for, and impacts of, flash droughts is needed. In the longer-term, more frequent observations and numerical model investigations are needed on the initiation and evolution of flash drought and future hazard risk of flash drought in Illinois, especially focused on areas of greatest sector impacts.	-Would like drought response to be included in the Co. Hazard Mitigation Plans for planning at both local and regional levels - It was noted that the Mitigation plans are developed at a Co. level and this type of information might not be helpful at that level so need to focus on local level It was noted that different planning is needed for long-term and flash droughts so this type of information would be valuable.
11. Research is needed to understand how periods of greater temperatures during the winter and spring seasons will change with a changing climate in Illinois. A better understanding is needed on how melting ice on Illinois rivers and melting moist soil layers will impact local flooding impacts. Support is needed for this research, resulting in public-oriented information and online tools targeted to those at risk of local flood events.	- No comments

• Local assistance help is needed for climate change issues/recommendations using 1 on 1 relationships. Some of these climate recommendations tie into outreach and coordination with local officials. Maybe add that as an additional recommendation.

#### **Table of Contents:**

- Wes shared the draft Table of Contents. It will be shared with the group. The TOC is a draft and will likely change as we begin writing.
- The Task Force was asked if anyone wanted to write any of the introduction sections. If so reach out to Wes.
- Next meeting, we need to shift our collective mindset together to pull together the Plan.
- Cross cutting issues and Social Justice need to be adequately addressed in each section.
- If anyone has any ideas from other reports they've done that could enhance our report, let us know.
- Try to include graphics, figures, tables, maps in each section to provide interest to the reader.
- Wes will try to send out a sample section to show groups what we are looking for as a final submission.

#### General:

- Project Schedule: (shifted by one month to allow more time to collaborate on each section)
  - Draft Sections due mid-March (basically take your section presented at the Task Force meeting and make changes as recommended by the Task Force)
  - Compiled Reports by mid-April for Task Force internal review
  - Public outreach mid-May
  - Final report Summer or early Fall
- Meeting Schedule:
  - o March: Review Combined Report and Introduction
  - April: Review Combined Report and Conclusions and discuss future public outreach

**Schedule:** The schedule will be revised and posted on the website.

**Next Meeting Outline:** It was determined using a poll that the next meeting will be set for March 28, 2022 at 9:00 A.M. to be held via Web-Ex.

The meeting was concluded at 11:00 A.M.